ERIC Document Resume	See Instruction Sheet	DATE OF RESUME 6/22/65	DATE RECEIVED

A. PUBLICATION DATA

1. ERIC NUMBER	2. ORIGINATOR CONTROL NO(S).	3. IDENTIFICATION NO.
ED000106	7444	N.A.

4. AUTHOR(S):
Chapman, Phillip Lowell

5. TITLE OF DOCUMENT ABSTRACTED:
A Study of the Existing Needs and Practices Relative to the "Introduction to Business" Course as Currently Offered in Colleges and Universities in the U.S.

6. PUBLICATION TITLE:
Penn State Review of Educational Research

7. EDITOR(S):
N.A.

8. PLACE OF ORIGIN
ORG. The Pennsylvania State Univ.
ST. University Park,
CITY, STATE Pa.
TELE. EXT.
INST/LOC CODE

9. PUBLISHER OR SOURCE
The Pennsylvania State University

10. VOL.	11. PAGES	12. MO./YR.	13. TOTAL PP.
IV	48-53	May 53	6

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TYPE OF REPORT
PROPOSAL ☐
IN-PROGRESS ☐
FINAL ☒
FOLLOW-UP ☐

OTHER ERIC REFERENCES:

ERIC SATELLITE CODE

B. INDEXING DATA

14. SUBJECT AREA

15. TYPE OF ENDEAVOR abstract of doctoral dissertation and experimental study

16. INDEXING TERMS (6-12)

abstracts	professional edu.	United States	
experimental studies	needs		
business edu.	curriculum		

17. ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

The purpose of this study was to determine current needs and practices relative to an "Introduction to Business" course as they exist in member schools of the American Association of Collegiate Schools of Business and in certain colleges and universities offering teacher training programs. Reviews the methods of investigation used and presents a summary of the findings. Includes a brief bibliography of related literature.

IC No.

18. SOURCE OF ABSTRACT

C. FUNDING DATA

19. SUPPORTING ORGANIZATION	20. DIVISION OR DEPT.	21. CONTRACT NO. / PROJECT NO.
	22. TOTAL COST OF PROJECT	
	23. DURATION OF PROJECT	U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Office of Education

IC Form 1

5/Reporter
Penn State Review of Educational Research
Vol IV, No 2, May 1953
7444

ED000106

A STUDY OF THE EXISTING NEEDS AND PRACTICES RELATIVE TO THE "INTRODUCTION TO BUSINESS" COURSE AS CURRENTLY OFFERED IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES OF THE UNITED STATES

- Phillip Lowell Chapman -

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Introduction

Many educators in collegiate schools of business think an Introductory Survey of Business Course is needed in college and university curricula. At the same time many schools do not include the course in the business program.

The fact that there appears to be a lack of uniformity among the colleges and universities in offering the course, while at the same time many educators have contended such a course is needed, might safely lead one to believe that a vital part of our education for business is still being omitted from the curriculum.

Statement of the Problem

It was the purpose of this study to analyze the existing needs and practices relative to the course, Introduction to Business, as is currently offered in colleges and universities of the United States. The elements of the problem are:

A. to determine the current needs and practices as they exist in schools having membership in the American Association of Collegiate Schools of Business.

B. to determine the current practices and needs among certain colleges and universities which offer teacher training programs.

C. to determine what certain businessmen think about the needs for such a course for college students.

D. to obtain an evaluation of this course from certain college students.

E. to give partial answers to the following questions:

1. To what extent is such a course offered in collegiate schools of business?

2. To what extent is such a course offered in the business teacher training curriculum?

3. What units of study or topics should be included in the course placed in the curricula of schools of business?

4. What units of study or topics should be studied in the teacher training curriculum?

5. Where should the course be placed in each curriculum?

6. To what extent do business and industrial leaders think such a course should be offered?

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7. Do college students and graduates who have studied such a course in college feel that the course has been of value to them?

Methods of Investigation

The normative survey method of investigation was used in the study. The questionnaire technique appeared to be a feasible way of securing information relative to curriculum content and teaching methods.

Three separate questionnaires were prepared and mailed to heads of departments of schools of business, to businessmen, and to college students and college graduates who had studied the course, Introduction to Business.

A. School to Which Questionnaires Were Sent.

Questionnaires were sent to schools having membership in Delta Pi Epsilon (DPE), Pi Omega Pi (POP), The American Association of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), and the National Association of Business Teacher Training Institutions (NABTTI).

B. Businessmen to Whom Questionnaires Were Sent.

Questionnaires were analyzed which had been returned by 205 manufacturers from forty-six states. The number of questionnaires sent to each state was apportioned according to the Manufacturing Index.[1] The names of businessmen to whom the questionnaires were sent were selected by lot from NAM News[2] and NAM 1950 Annual Report & 1951 Officers, Directors, Committees.[3]

C. College Students and Former Students to Whom Questionnaires Were Sent.

Questionnaires were analyzed which had been returned by 409 college students from twenty-three colleges and universities scattered from New York to California.

Review of Related Literature

For related materials the Bibliography of Research Studies in Business Education 1920-1940;[4] Bibliography of Research Studies in Business Education 1941-1948;[5] and the Business Education Indexes 1941-1950[6] were carefully examined.

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[1]United States Department of Commerce, Census of Manufacturers: 1947, Volume I, General Summary, Washington, D. C., United States Government Printing Office, 1950, p.32.

[2]NAM News, Section II, "Report to Members--1950 Officers, Directors, Committees," New York: National Association of Manufacturers, 1950.

[3]NAM News, 1950 Annual Report & 1951 Officers, Directors, Committees, New York: National Association of Manufacturers, 1951.

[4]Delta Pi Epsilon, Bibliography of Research Studies in Business Education 1920-1940, New York: Gregg Publishing Company, 1943.

[5]School of Business, Indiana University, Bibliography of Research Studies in Business Education 1941-1948, Bloomington, Indiana, 1949.

[6]Delta Pi Epsilon, Business Education Indexes 1941-1950, New York: The Gregg Publishing Company, 1941-1951.

Eleven research studies were found which were thought to be either directly or indirectly related to this study. When those studies were examined, one was believed to be closely related to the present research.

A study similar in some respects to this research was made by Hinton.[7] Materials to be included in a course in Business Principles and Problems were evaluated by twenty-five so-called experts in the field and from those evaluations a course of study composed of twenty-one units was constructed.

The questionnaire used in the present study included all of the twenty-one units recommended by Hinton plus ten additional ones.

Summary of Findings

A. Findings from Questionnaires Returned by Colleges and Universities.

1. Twenty-eight schools or 42.42 per cent of the responding institutions having membership in the AACSB offered the course.

2. Seventy-one schools or 59.17 per cent of the responding schools having membership in the NABTTI offered the course.

3. When all schools included in the survey were grouped together, it was found that ninety-one or 43.1 per cent offered the course; .5 per cent did not indicate whether or not the course was offered; and 22.7 per cent did not respond to the questionnaire.

The following statements represent the major findings from an analysis of questionnaires returned by the ninety-one schools offering the course.

a. Introduction to Business was the course title used by 64.8 per cent of the schools offering the course, but twenty-eight different course titles were used in all.

b. The course had been offered an average of 6.6 years among the ninety-one schools.

c. The course was one semester in length in 58.2 per cent of the schools, one quarter in length in 20.9 per cent of the institutions, and was offered either two or three quarters or semesters in 18.7 per cent of the schools.

d. The course was offered in the freshman year of college by 86.8 per cent of the schools.

e. The course was required of business majors by 79.1 per cent of the schools.

f. Twenty-eight different textbooks were found to be used in teaching the course. One book was used by forty-two schools and thirty-one of those indicated

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[7]Leroy Marshall Hinton, "A Suggested Course of Study in Business Principles and Problems for the College Student Beginning His Study in Business Education," (Unpublished M. S. Thesis, North Texas State Teachers College, Denton, 1941).

that the text was sufficient for the needs of the class.

g. Twenty-five schools or 82.4 per cent of the schools offering the course indicated the texts being used were sufficient for the course needs.

h. The majority of the schools were using a book accompanied by a teacher's manual.

i. Twenty schools or 22 per cent were found to be using workbooks.

j. An average of 6.6 hours per school was devoted to visual aids in teaching the course.

k. Sixty-one schools or 67 per cent indicated printed tests were desirable in teaching the course.

B. Findings from Questionnaires Returned by Businessmen.

Businessmen seemed to agree to the following:

1. It is important that employees realize the importance of business to the national economy.

2. Workers in sales, production, or any department do not readily see the importance of all phases of business.

3. Workers who understand the various phases of business are preferred to those understanding their own department only.

4. The majority of college graduates do not seem to realize that the welfare of our nation is dependent upon the welfare of the nation's business.

5. Colleges and universities should place in the business curriculum a course which has aims similar to those often claimed for Introduction to Business.

6. Sixty-nine per cent of the businessmen thought such a course should be placed in the curriculum even if it necessitated cutting out an advanced course such as C. P. A. Reviews, Office Management, or Problems in Retailing.

C. Findings from Questionnaires Returned by College Students.

An examination of questionnaires returned by college students revealed the following:

1. Responses from 395 persons, or 76.96 per cent, indicated a general understanding of all phases of business was acquired because of having studied Introduction to Business.

2. Eighty-two per cent of 397 students' responses indicated that students believed the course gave them a better understanding of business because of an increased business vocabulary.

3. Twenty-five per cent of 397 respondents believed the course helped the

student decide upon an area of specialization.

4. Sixty-four per cent of 397 respondents believed they were better equipped for a position in business because of having had the course.

5. The students were asked, "If you were re-entering college on a business curriculum and had a free choice, would you take Introduction to Business?" Seventy-five per cent of 397 persons answered Yes and 24 per cent answered No.

Eighteen units of study were rated to be essential to the course, "Introduction to Business," by college educators, college students, and businessmen. The predominant ratings by each of the three groups are indicated by E for essential, U for useful, and N for not needed or may be omitted from the course. All units of study which were rated essential by two or more groups were considered to be essential to the course and are listed below:

Units of Study	Educators	Businessmen	Students
	Ratings		
1. Relation of Business to Society	E	E	E
2. Nature of Business Forms	E	U	E
3. Personnel	E	E	E
4. Management and Management's Tools	E	E	E
5. Finance	E	E	E
6. Risk	E	U	E
7. Government Regulations and Business	E	E	E
8. Marketing	E	E	E
9. Law	E*	U	E
10. Production	E	E	U
11. Causes of Business Failure	E	E	E
12. How to Apply for a Job	E*	E	E
13. Ethics in Business	E	E	E
14. Advertising	E	U	E
15. Retailing	E	U	E
16. Salesmanship	E	E	E

17. Business Correspondence	N	E	E
18. Office Management	U	E	E

Note: All the above ratings were found to be highly reliable when tested by Chi-Square, other than those marked with the asterisk. Those marked by the asterisk were found to be unreliable ratings.

The reliable ratings indicate that the persons checking the questionnaires were not checking at random; this reflects real intent on their part.

Implications

At the collegiate level there is need for the course Introduction to Business. Such a course should include all the eighteen elements listed above. Possibly the most important elements are: personnel, ethics, and several factors involving the setting of business in society with governmental and marketing influences.